



1 3 LIBRARY

X-56563

Woodward, T.

The Irish Convocation; Should
be Revived?

THE
IRISH CONVOCATION;
SHOULD IT BE REVIVED?

BY
THE VERY REV. T. WOODWARD, A.M.,
Dean of Dowl.

DUBLIN:
HODGES, SMITH AND CO., 104, GRAFTON-STREET.
LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS AND CO.
1861.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AT the request of several friends the following pages are reprinted from the *Irish Ecclesiastical Gazette* of April, 1861.

I have appended a Letter from his Grace the Lord Primate, in which I am happy to find my humble opinion, as to the unadviseableness of an Irish Convocation, fortified by the highest Ecclesiastical authority in this country.

T. W.

*Deanery, Downpatrick,
July 25, 1861.*

THE IRISH CONVOCATION,

ETC., ETC.

THE *English Churchman* of February 14, concludes its report of the proceedings of the York Convocation, assembled on the 6th of the same month, no longer as an empty form, but under circumstances of a more favorable character than any which have occurred since the resumption of discussions by the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, with the following curt but important question : “*How about the Irish Convocation?*” We need not tell our readers with how much interest the same inquiry is made by many of our clerical friends in Ireland. The royal license so unaccountably conceded to the Convocation of Canterbury, do what they have no right or power to do, viz., to revise the 29th Canon, which forms part of the code of discipline established by the 5th Article* of the Legislative Union, for the *whole united*

* “That the Churches of England and Ireland, as now by law established, be united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called ‘The United Church of England and Ireland;’ and that the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said united Church shall be, and shall remain in full force for ever, as the same are now by law established for the Church of Eng-

Church ; the independent action of the Canterbury Convocation as to the revision or repeal of that 29th Canon, without reference to or notice of this portion of the united Church ; the recent manifesto of the English Bishops on doctrinal matters affecting the whole united Church, without the signatures of the Irish Prelates, who, with themselves, form the Episcopate of that united Church ; the revivification of the Convocation of York—all these are making many of us ventilate this question, which the *English Churchman* represents as so common across the channel, “ How about the Irish Convocation ? ”

In various quarters we perceive indications of the interest excited by this question. In Cork this subject has been mooted in the Episcopal Charge of its distinguished Bishop. In Down and Connor, a committee of the clergy has been formed to prepare a petition to the Queen “ *to assemble Irish Convocation.* ”

land ; and that the continuance and preservation of the said united Church, as the Established Church of England and Ireland, shall be deemed and taken to be an essential and fundamental part of the Union.” The repeal of the 29th English Canon, by the Canterbury Convocation, even if they had power to repeal it (which they clearly have not), would not of course affect the obligation of the 16th Irish Canon, which is its counterpart. If, as many eminent jurists hold, the Irish Canons are still binding —a *different* discipline and government would have been established in the two integral portions of the united Church. What would be loosed in England, would still bind in Ireland. We hold this attempt of the Convocation of Canterbury as a direct contravention of the 5th Article of the Legislative Union. See the whole subject discussed in the Opinion of A. J. Stephens, Esq., Q.C., on the case submitted in behalf of the Primate of Ireland.”

In the Diocesan Calendar* of that united diocese, recently published by the Rev. A. T. Lee, a performance unique in Ireland, and which does its author the utmost credit, we find an urgent appeal for the reassembling of *Ireland's "ancient" Convocation*.

We must frankly own, *in limine*, that we are far from being so sanguine, as we know many are, as to the benefits to be expected from a revival of synodical action in any shape. We cannot forget the sad experience of Gregory Nazianzen. The celebrated dictum of that illustrious Father may, perhaps, be too unqualified, but much weight must attach to his authority on such a subject : “It was a severe judgment which Gregory Nazianzen passed upon the Synods of his time ; and is the more to be regarded because it was the result of a frequent trial and a sad observation : that he fled all such assemblies, as *having never seen any one of them come to a happy conclusion* ; or, that it did not cause more mischief than it remedied. Their contention (says he) and ambition is not to be expressed.”—*Abp. Wake's Authority of Christian Princes*.

We fear that this caustic distich may reach farther than Dort in applicability—

Dordrechti synodus, nodus—chorus integer, æger,
Conventus, ventus—sessio, stramen. Amen.

Whatever be the abstract right of the Church to an internal self-governing authority, that right does not

* Down and Connor and Dromore Diocesan Calendar. Edited by the Rev. Alfred T. Lee ; M.A., M.R.I.A., Rector of Aghoghill, and Rural Dean.

now belong to the English Convocations (and it is absurd to suppose more power would rest upon the Irish); for it has been surrendered by the Act of Submission. By that act, (25 Henry VIII, c. 19) to borrow the words of Coke, “their jurisdiction and power is much limited and straitened concerning their making of new canons ; for they must *both have license to make them, and after they be made,* the king’s royal assent to allow them before they be put in execution.”

Convocation, independently *in se*, possesses *vox et præterea nihil*; that voice may influence by moral suasion, but its power to command or enforce obedience, does not exceed *nihil*. It cannot authoritatively impose a single canon ; it cannot alter one syllable in our formularies. It cannot pronounce a binding decision upon any controverted point. They, talk, indeed, of bringing before Convocation, the notorious volume of the *Septem contra Christum*. What can Convocation do at most but project a *brutum fulmen*? *Parliament* indeed, (with Convocation to assent) is the authority appointed (1 Elizabeth, cap. i. sec. 36,) to judge of heresy, “no matter or cause shall be adjudged heresy but * * * or such as shall hereafter be determined to be heresy by *Parliament!* with the assent of the clergy in their Convocation.” Can the green withes of a local modern Convocation bind the men who have burst the bonds imposed on them by the decisions of general councils, and by the creeds of the Catholic Church ?

The Church was troubled at the close of the 17 century by a school of rationalists and sceptics. “There

seems," says a zealous advocate* for Convocation in 1697, "a conspiracy amongst a sort of men, under the stile of Deists, Socinians, *Latitudinarians*, *Denyers of Mysteries*, and *Pretending Explainers of them* —to undermine and overthrow the Catholic faith. And a Convocation, regularly meeting, and acting freely, is the greatest fence against those mischiefs, and the most proper instrument to apply a remedy. These things have been countenanced by members of our own Church, *nay, by some of the clerical order.*" Archbishop Wake† replies—"Let us suppose that scepticism, Deism, and even Atheism, is pouring in on us—would this gentleman have a Convocation called to declare that the Church of England not only believes in God, but in Jesus Christ, and his Gospel, too? Has Christ been thus long preached among us to leave it still in doubt, whether after all, our Church is a Christian Church or no? If neither our public preaching, nor our public writing in vindication of this faith, neither what our Convocations have formerly declared, and we all continue to support and defend, be sufficient to satisfy mankind, that the Church of England condemns all Atheism and Deism, and that however such persons may live among us, yet they are by no means sanctioned or approved by her, I cannot imagine what this author thinks a new Convocation could do more to assert her innocence. A Convocation may sit and draw up what creeds and confessions it will, but, if they expect that those who despise the authority of

* Letters to a Convocation man. 1697.

† Authority of Christian Princes, &c. 1697.

the ancient general councils of the Church, should be concluded by their definitions, it will no doubt appear that they flatter themselves with vain hopes ; and they will find, too late, that those who are not to be restrained by what has been already determined, will much less regard any new decisions that can be made against them. Our Articles, our Creeds, our Liturgy, our Homilies, all bear witness to the Catholic faith in opposition to these heretics. Our sermons, and our writings declare against them. And what can any abroad or at home desire—either the Church or her ministers should do more ? or what more could a Convocation, were it to meet to-morrow, do ?”

But, granted that synodical action is desirable for the Church in this country, are we to seek for it in the shape of a revival of the *Irish Convocation*? We proceed to point out, what seem to us, some grave objections.

And, first, Convocation is a *novel* institute, unknown to the Irish Church before the time of James I. It was an arbitrary creation of his prerogative—an exotic transplanted from England, it never became racy of our soil. It never attained even a respectable antiquity, for it died before the completion of its first centennial period; and still a mystical obscurity seemed to envelope it during its short existence. The Convocation of 1615, the first held in Ireland, was in fact a mere servile, though inaccurate copy of the English Synod. It was the anxious desire of James to assimilate this country as much as possible to England. The Parliamentary representation of this kingdom was arranged after the English model.

"Parliaments had from the reign of Edward II. been called from time to time in Ireland, upon particular occasions, but they consisted of few members. The number of temporal peers was always small till the reign of Henry VIII., and of those, some were generally in rebellion, or did not care to attend ; and of the spiritual, such archbishops and bishops as were resident in the mere Irish countries, and did not acknowledge the king for their patron, were never summoned to any parliament. And as for the House of Commons, it sometimes was composed only of the deputies of the four shires of the pale, and writs were never sent any where but into shire ground, inhabited by the English who continued in obedience to the state and in subjection to the English laws *

* * * But King James, having now settled Ireland in peace, divided the whole kingdom into counties, and erected forty new boroughs in the seventeen counties last appointed, resolved to call a general representation of the whole nation, in which all the inhabitants thereof, whether of the old English extraction, or the new British colony, or the old Irish natives, should meet together to make laws for the common good of themselves and their posterity."—*Carte's Life of Ormonde*, vol. i. pp. 37, 38.

This first Parliament of James met, May 18, 1613.

His next care was to introduce an uniformity in ecclesiastical administration. And accordingly a Convocation, a mere copy of the English synod, was soon after summoned, and met for the first time in 1615.

Preparatory to the Convocation, King James directed an inquiry into the condition of the Church

in Ireland. To obtain this information “instructions and interrogations” were issued to the archbishops and bishops of this realm. Such was the miserable carelessness of that day respecting the preservation of public papers—that but one diocesan return to this inquiry is now extant. Instead of a panorama of the Irish Church, we have but a mutilated sketch of Ferns and Leighlin, contained in the “humble answer of Thomas (Ram) bishop of Ferns and Leighlin to his Majesty’s instructions and interrogations.” (Reports of the Commissioners of Public Records in Ireland, vol. i. p. 264.)

We feel somewhat of sorrow that truth compels us thus to divest the Irish Convocation of that reverend and hoar antiquity which we doubt not many of our readers piously have accorded to it. We are happy to be able to adduce in support of our own view on this important point the conclusive testimony of Dr. Elrington and Bishop Mant.

“In the year 1615,” says Dr. Elrington (Life of Ussher), “a convocation of the Irish Clergy, formed after the model of the English Convocation, assembled in Dublin. This seems to have been the *First Convocation* ever held in Ireland. Dr. Parr, indeed, and Dr. Smith assert the contrary; Dr. Parr says, there was now a Parliament at Dublin, and so a Convocation of the Clergy; and Dr. Smith, ‘ordinibus regni Hiberniæ in Parlamento Dublinii anno MDCXV. habito coactis, pro more indicta erat nationalis Archiepiscoporum Episcoporum reliquique cleri Hiberniæ Synodus;’ but various circumstances throw a doubt upon their evidence. The first cause

of doubt is to be found in the Convocation itself. The Parliament and Convocation certainly did not meet at the same time as stated by Dr. Parr. The Parliament met on the 18th of May, 1613; and the Convocation did not assemble till the end of 1614, and most probably not till 1615. Then the proceedings of the Convocation argue *novelty and imperfection*; the Clergy do not appear to have granted any subsidies, or even to have claimed the right of taxing themselves. There is no Act of the Irish Parliament to confirm the grant of a subsidy by the Clergy; yet there is in existence the transmiss of an Act for confirming the subsidies granted by Convocation. The existence of the transmiss proves the wish of the English government to have all things done regularly after the model of the Convocation in England; and its not being made use of establishes the fact that the Irish Convocation *did not understand the proper mode of proceeding*. The only business that is recorded to have been transacted, the formation of the articles, *was not concluded in proper form*. They were not signed as in England by all the members, but by Archbishop Jones,* speaker of the House of Bishops in Convocation, and the Prolocutor of the House of the Clergy in their names." But while the imperfections of the Convocation of 1615 only afford an indirect argument for its non-existence at an earlier period, we can obtain more complete proof by examining the proceedings of former reigns. In the reign of Henry VIII. we cannot find any refer-

* Archbishop Jones took precedence, as *Lord Chancellor*, of Primate Hampton.

ence of Ecclesiastical matters to the Convocation, nor can we find any claims of exemption on the part of the Clergy. They were taxed in common with his Majesty's other subjects. In the same reign there is a passage in an Act of Parliament which is sometimes adduced as an evidence of the existence of Convocation, but which properly understood, seems to prove that no Convocation existed in Ireland. The Preamble of 28 Henry VIII. cap 12, states, "At every Parliament begun and holden within this land, two Proctors of every diocese within the same land have been used and accustomed to be summoned and warned to be at the same Parliament, which were never by order of law, usage, custom, or otherwise any member or parcel of the whole body of the Parliament; or have any right, any voice, or suffrage within same, but only be there as counsellors and assistants to the same; and upon such things of learning, as should happen in controversy, to declare their opinions much like as the Convocation within the realm of England is commonly at every Parliament begun and holden by the King's Highness' special License." Now as Dr. Elrington argues, this reference to the Convocation of England appears to be decisive proof that there was no such body existing in Ireland at that time; for, if there had, the comparison would, undoubtedly, have been made with their own Convocation. The Act was caused by an attempt of the Proctors to be *Members of Parliament*; an attempt which it attributes "to their ambitious minds and presumption, inordinately desiring to have authority,

and to intermeddle with every cause or matter without any just ground." "This attempt seems very similar to the demand made by the English Convocation of 1547, yet there is no appearance of any such body as that which acted in England; nor is there any reference made in the act to the *Præmunientes* clause: it simply speaks of two Proctors out of every diocese."

In the year 1551, Edward VI. sent an order that the Liturgy of the Church of England should be read in Ireland. Upon this order, Sir Anthony St. Leger is not reported to have summoned a Convocation, "but," says Cox, "before he issued a proclamation for the observance of it, he called an assembly of the Archbishops and Bishops with others of the then Clergy of Ireland to propose the matter to them."

In the 2nd year of Elizabeth, a Parliament was assembled, and no mention is made of a Convocation, though acts with respect to the Church were passed. And in the 3rd year of Elizabeth, there was not any Parliament, yet she signifies her pleasure to Lord Sussex, the Lord Lieutenant, for a *general meeting of the Clergy* and the establishment of the Protestant religion.

There is, indeed, a passage in the MS. collections* of Dudley Loftus, which has been adduced as proof of a Convocation having been held in 1560. "This year was held a Convocation of *Bishops*, at the Queen's command, for establishing the Protestant religion." But he must have used the word Convocation merely to

* In Marsh's Library.

express a *meeting of the bishops*, and would have adopted a very different phraseology had he intended to describe the assembling of the Convocation.

In the year 1566, a book of articles, twelve in number, was put forth by the authority of the Lord Deputy, Sir H. Sidney, *the Archbishops and Bishops*, and other, Her Majesty's High Commissioners for causes Ecclesiastical in the same realm, which was to be publicly read by the clergy at their "possession taking, and twice every year afterwards." No allusion is made to any Convocation in reference to these articles. The only copy supposed to be extant is now in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.

And such, also, is the conclusion of Bishop Mant, deduced from a process of reasoning very similar to that of Dr. Elrington:—"It was not until a late period after the era of the Reformation that Convocation appears to have been assembled at all in Ireland. In the 28th year of the reign of Henry VIII., when several acts of Parliament passed, vesting the supremacy in the Crown, there are several reasons for supposing that *there was no such body*. Of any such, there *is no historical mention*; and the clergy, in common with other subjects, were taxed by Act of Parliament alone."—Hist. Ch. of Ireland, vol. ii., p. 157. The proctors summoned to Parliament, and referred to in 28 Henry VIII., chap. 12, are clearly distinguished by Bishop Mant, from the proctors of the English Convocation. The words in the preamble, "much like as the Convocation within the realm of England, is commonly at every Parliament begun and holden by the King's highness' special license," at first

view would, doubtless, seem to indicate a similarity between the meeting of these Irish Proctors and the English Convocation. "But," as the Bishop explains it, "the likeness here noticed, seems to have referred rather to the fact of their being summoned than to their power when assembled ; for, unlike the English Convocation, there is not evidence of their having been in any way an independent, deliberative, legislative body : but they seem to have been assembled only as counsellors and assistants to the Parliament."

No Convocation assembled in the reign of Edward VI. Bishop Mant contends that the *pro re nata* assembly of bishops and clergy, summoned in 1551, by the Vice-Roy St. Leger, to receive the King's order for the Liturgy of the Church of England to be read in Ireland, "had no appearance of a regular Convocation."

So also no convocation appears in Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth. In the second year of her reign the Parliament of Ireland passed the Act of Uniformity; but by the collective body of the clergy nothing was done in relation to that Act. And when in the following year (1560) the Queen signified her pleasure to the Earl of Sussex "for a general meeting of the Clergy of Ireland, and the Establishment of the Protestant religion through the several dioceses of the Kingdom," the meeting which was in consequence assembled "*presents no features of a regular Convocation*," and soon afterwards dispersed themselves.

And when King James I., in the tenth year of his reign, assembled his Parliament in May, 1613, there is no contemporaneous assembling of a Convocation ;

nor is there the appearance of such a meeting during the latter part of that year, or during the year following, nor until the subsequent year, 1615, when the Artieles of Religion were agreed upon by the Clergy, according to their prefixed title. This appears to have been the first regular Convocation of the Clergy of the Church of Ireland, who assembled in their several houses.

Of this Convocation there are no remains, except these articles. (Mant's *History*.)

We are aware that an argument for the greater antiquity of Irish Convocation is attempted to be raised on the words of the 7th canon of the celebrated Synod of Cashel, held in 1172. We quote the exact original expressions from Giraldus Cambrensis.*

“ Septimo. Ut cum bona confessione decedentibus, et Missarum et Vigiliarum exhibitione et more sepe liendi obsequium debitum persolvatur. *Itaque* omnia divina ad instar sacrosanctæ Ecclesiæ, juxta quod Anglicana observat Ecclesia, in omnibus partibus Ecclesiæ amodo tractentur.”†

“ Seventhly. That due care be taken of the obse-

* (Hibernia Exp., cap. 34.) *Item* is substituted for *itaque*, in the case submitted for the Lord Primate of Ireland for opinion.

† Giraldus immediately after this canon subjoins:

“ Ardmachiensis vero Primas, ob corporis infirmitatem et grandævitatem, tum præsens non fuerat, sed postea Dubliniam venit. Regiæ dispositioni per omnia favorem præbens, vulgi opinione vir sacer, vaccam candidam, cuius solum lacte vescebatur, secum, quocumque venerat, circumducens.”

If bishops now-a-days would be content with such fare, one great obstacle to the extension of the Episcopate would be removd.

quies of those who die after a good confession by means of masses, vigils (or wakes), and decent burial. Likewise, that all divine matters shall for the future in all parts of Ireland be regulated after the model of Holy Church, according to the observances of the Anglican Church."

It is contended that this canon conformed the Church of Ireland in future to the Anglican model ; and that by virtue of it, a Convocation, similar to what was regularly established in England in the reign of Edward I., became the authorized Synod of the Irish Church. However specious this may sound, it is mere theory. It is completely demolished by the invincible logic of facts. Not a ghost of Convocation flits through the darkness of the age intervening between the first Edward and first James. But properly understood, the canon, *quantum valeat*, can have no bearing on this subject. It refers to ceremonial observances connected with sepulture, not to *Church government*. We confess that we set small value on the enactments of this synod, convened for the purpose of forcing Popery on Ireland, by assimilating its Church to the English. It may well be questioned *what right* Henry II. possessed to convene an ecclesiastical council, when his own authority was founded solely on a Bull of Adrian IV., confirmed by Alexander III., generously bestowing Ireland as a gift, and stating as the authority for such munificence, "Certainly there is no doubt but that Ireland, and *all the islands* on which Christ the Sun of Righteousness hath shined, and which have received instruction in the Christian faith, do belong of right

to St. Peter and to the Holy Roman Church!" (Ussher's "Sylloge Ep. Hib.", No. 16).

To carry out this Papal assumption, and recognize the claim of Henry, was the object for which that monarch convened a compulsory synod, which was presided over by the Papal Legate Christian, Bishop of Lismore. If the Papal title was a baseless vision, he could not convey to another any authority in virtue of a fiction; and all acts founded on that original assumption—that *πρωτον ψευδος*—are *ipso facto* null and void. Water cannot rise above its original level: *delegated* power cannot become more legitimate than its source.

Both Adrian and Alexander were sadly exercised by the accounts they received of us poor Irish, but could hit on no plan of reformation but the notable expedient of making us a present to Henry II. Giraldus Cambrensis (in an old translation quoted by King in his valuable history of the Church of Ireland), tells us that "when the Pope Adryan hadde herd opynly the evyle lyfe and ye sinfule that ye folke of Irland ladden wors than wyld bestes, he graunted the Kyng that he shold into Irland wend." Alexander is not quite so thorough-going in his generosity, for he reserves privileges in Ireland as *Lord of the Isles*. "It is not," he writes to Henry, Sept. 20, 1172, "without lively sensations of satisfaction that we have learned of the expedition which you have made against that nation of the Irish, who, in utter disregard of the fear of God, are wandering with unbridled licentiousness into every downward course of crime. For not to refer at present to the

other enormities and crimes in which this people indulge themselves with abundant profanity. . . *they all universally eat flesh-meat in Lent*, and pay no tithes, and show none of that respect which they ought to entertain for God's holy churches, or for ecclesiastical persons. . . . And as your Highness is aware that the Church of Rome *has by right an authority over islands*, we earnestly exhort your Highness to preserve to us the privileges belonging to St. Peter in the land aforesaid." (King's Hist. of the Ch. of Ireland, supplementary volume.)

So utterly worthless would be the authority of the Synod of Cashel to establish a new form of ecclesiastical polity. But in point of fact the codicil to the seventh canon has no reference to Church government ; it is ritual, not dynastic. We dismiss this part of our subject with a repetition of the statement that no trace of Irish Convocation can be found prior to the year 1615. There are, we believe, extant amongst the archives of the See of Armagh* some

* It is greatly to be regretted that the valuable collection of papers in the "Muniment Room" at Armagh is so inaccessible to the public. By an arbitrary and illegal assumption of power, Primate Robinson ordered in his will that in future a large mass of documents of historic interest, which *were not his private property*, should be *concealed* from public view, and placed, *inter secretiora*, in a locker, accessible only to his successors in the Primacy. Papers, which probably are of incalculable value to the historian, are thus kept *concealed* to the present hour in obedience to this exclusive and illegal ukase. Primate Robinson might by will shut up his own *private* papers : he had no right whatever to lock up the *Metropolitan Archives*. At all events, his successor has full power to loose what he has bound. We doubt not

records of diocesan and provincial synods held before that date, but of a nature wholly dissimilar from Convocation. This is a chapter in our ecclesiastical history which is involved in outer darkness. Another eminent service to the literature of Ireland would be rendered by Dr. Reeves if he would elucidate this subject by the light of that accurate and various scholarship which illuminates every object which it touches.

And if the Irish Convocation cannot claim the reverence of those who desire *stare super vias antiquas*, no more does it command respect from its practical efficiency. From first to last it was a scramble. It was a tangled web of informalities. Its real status seemed matter of perpetual doubt and uncertainty. The very first meeting, in 1615, not only bore evident marks of "novelty and imperfection," as Dr. Elrington observes, but committed the blunder (so disastrous to a cordial union with the English Church), of adopting the very Lambeth articles which had been repudiated by the Church in England.

The next Convocation did not meet until 1634. Archbishop Ussher presided. The chief business of this synod was to *undo what had been done in 1615*. The articles passed by Ussher in the First Convocation must be got rid of. It could be done only by a side-wind. The English 39 Articles were *approved*, the Irish 104 Articles were *not repealed*; and in consequence of this bungling legislation, it was left doubtful whether *both sets of Articles* did not bind the

that if the matter was brought before him, the present Primate would at once cancel this absurd, illegal rule, and open these MSS. to that *small public* who would care to inspect them.

Irish Church ! It was only by a skilful *manceuvre* of Bramhall's, in concert with Strafford, that the Irish Convocation was hoodwinked as it were, and led blind-fold to the step which united them to England. It was a pious fraud designed to produce uniformity and peace between the two Churches. Bishop Vesey, in his Life of Primate Bramhall, declares, on the very best authority, that the first Irish Canon (which approves and receives the English articles) never would have passed had Convocation understood the purport and effect of it. "By the passing of this canon, the Articles of the Church of England were superinduced; and consequently those of Ireland, formerly in force, were now virtually repealed. Had this been in time considered, it had prevented the Bishop of Derry's design." He also speaks of the Convocation "being surprised, if not plainly outwitted." When Bramhall proceeded to carry on his plan of assimilation by proposing the adoption of the English Canons as well as Articles, he found an unconquerable determination in the Irish Convocation to assert its independence. It was resolved not to be absorbed into one Church, as it is now by the Legislative Union. Bramhall indeed endeavoured to sooth them into acquiescence, by saying, that "They would no more resign their privileges and authority in receiving of their canons than their faith in (receiving) their Articles." "But," as Vesey slyly adds, (notwithstanding his admiration for Bramhall), "this was but an ill argument to them who had so repented their having done so much, that they resolved not to cure themselves by a second wound."

It was, in fact, only by suppressing the avowal of

their real intention, namely, virtually to repeal the Irish by the enactment of the English Articles, that Strafford and Bramhall succeeded in gaining over the Irish Convocation, thus “causing the Articles of the Church of England to be accepted as the rule of public confessions and persuasions here; that they and we might be ‘populus unius labii,’ of one heart and one lip, building up our hopes of heaven on a most holy faith, and taking away that Shibboleth which made this Church lisp too undecently; or rather in some little degree to speak the speech of Ashdod, and not the language of Canaan.”* Very different was the view of Primate Ussher and several other prelates, who required subscription to these “undecent” as well as to the English Articles! And, such was the difficulty of bringing the Irish into harmonious action with the English Convocation, that all efforts failed to bring about the adoption of the English Canons by the Convocation of 1634, that adopted the English Articles. In a letter to Laud, Strafford thus alludes to this subject of the Irish Canons—“I am clear of your lordship’s opinion it were fit the canons of England were received here as well as the articles, but the Primate is highly against it; the business is merely point of honour (or, as Sir Thomas Cognesby would have expressed it, matter of *punctilio*), lest Ireland might become subject to the Church of England, as the province of York is to that of Canterbury.” Might not such points of *punctilio* arise now between Irish and English Convocation if separate? This divergence of the Irish

* Bishop Taylor’s Funeral Sermon on Archbishop Bramhall.

from the English Canons, occasions a most serious difficulty on the question, What Canons are now in-force in Ireland ? By the 5th article of the Act of Union, the “ doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the United Church shall be, and remain in full force, for ever as the same are now by law established for the Church of England.” Consequently the English Canons must be the rule of the United Church. But are the Irish Canons also in force ? “ The question,” says Dr. Elrington, “ seems beset with difficulties, and has not, I believe, been ever legally determined.”—*Life of Ussher*, p. 179.

Thus unsatisfactory were the proceedings of the second Irish Convocation. In 1639 Convocation again assembled. No business of any importance, except the granting of subsidies, seems to have been transacted. After a long interval another meeting was convened in 1661, within two days of the assembling of the Parliament. It was little more than forty-five years since the first Convocation had been held, and yet the antecedents of the Institution were already involved in darkness.

The Lords* Justices and Privy Council are obliged to make an order for the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin, “ to meet and advise of, and return their

* By the Lords Justices and Council, Maurice Eustace *Cano*, Orrery, Mountrath.

“ His Majesty’s gracious Commission for calling a Parliament in this Kingdom having been this day read at this board, it is ordered that the most Reverend Fathers in God, the Lord Archbishop of Ardmagh and the Lord Archbishop of Dublin, do forthwith meet, and advise of, and return unto us their opinion, how

opinions, how all things requisite in order to the Convocation, and other things relating to the Church may be done and prepared." The answer of the Archbishops is decisive of the fact that Irish Convocation was a servile and yet incorrect copy of the English forms. Those Prelates replied, "that they had considered the matter, and particularly made search for a form of writs to be issued as formerly, for Convocating the Clergy, and could find no other than what they annexed, which they conceived a sufficient form to be sent to every of the Archbishops and Bishops." They add the celebrated "Præmonentes" clause, forming part of the writ, by which, with slight variation, from the time of Edw. I., the English bishops are summoned to Parliament.

"Præmonentes decanum et capitulum Ecclesiæ vestræ, ac archidiaconum, totumque clerum vestræ dioces. Quod idem decanus et archidiaconus in

all things legally requisite in order to the Convocation may be done and prepared."

Given at the Council Chamber in Dublin, 25th March, 1661.

On this order the two Archbishops made the following report:—

April 3rd, 1661.

In pursuance of your lordships' written order, we have considered of things requisite in order to the convocation, and particularly have made search for a form of writs to be issued as formerly for convocating the clergy; and *can find as yet no other*, than what is of the tenor hereunto annexed, which we conceive a sufficient form for the present to be sent presently to every of the Archbishops and Bishops.

J. ARMACHAN (Bramhall).

J. A. DUBLIN (Margetson).

(Then follows the clause *Præmonentes* out of the Bishops' *Parliament* writ, by which the clergy were summoned to *Parliament*.)

propriis personis suis, ac dictum capitulum per unum, idemque cleris per duos procuratores idoneos, plenam et sufficientem potestatem ab ipsis capitulo et clero divisim habentes predictis die et loco personaliter intersint; ad consentiendum his quae tunc ibidem de communi consilio dicti regni divina favente Providentia contigerint ordinari." The reply of the Archbishops is a proof, if their information was correct, that no legitimate Convocation had previously been summoned in Ireland. They could find no trace* of any writ having been issued to summon a Convocation. They could not only adduce a clause in the Bishops' Parliament Writs, which summoned a certain number of clergy to attend Parliament along with them. Now this summons to attend Parliament was not the summons to Convocation. Besides this summons to Parliament contained in the Bishops' Parliamentary Writs (and by which the clergy probably never were convened after the time of

* In the Royal Letters Patent prefixed to the Book of Canons of 1634, mention is certainly made of *Provincial* writs. "Whereas, our Bishops, Deans of our Cathedral Churches, Archdeacons, Chapters, and Colleges, and the rest of the clergy within our Kingdom of Ireland, were summoned and called by virtue of our writs directed to the *Archbishops* of the four several Provinces, and bearing date the four-and-twentieth day of May, in the tenth year of our reign, to appear before the said Archbishops in the Cathedral Church of St. Patrick's, Dublin, upon the one-and-twentieth day of July then next ensuing. Who did thereupon, at the time appointed, and in the said Cathedral Church of St. Patrick, assemble themselves and appear in Convocation according to the tenor of the said writs." If such writs had actually been issued in 1634, how was it *possible* that the Archbishops in 1661 could find no trace of any such?

Edw. III.), another summons to Convocation, called the Provincial Writ, was from the time of Edw. II. the legitimate instrument for convening the Ecclesiastical Synod. Archbishop Winchelsey prevailed on that monarch, besides the writs summoning the bishops and clergy to Parliament, to issue another writ to the archbishops requiring them to convene the clergy in Synod. It is in pursuance of this latter Provincial Writ to the archbishops, that the English Convocations have been ever since assembled. They are assemblies wholly different in character from those meetings of the clergy who were also summoned to Parliament as assessors. Of the proper mode of summoning a Convocation, the bishops in 1661 could find no trace. They could only discover a form which was no summons to Convocation; they produce instead an antiquated clause in reality obsolete since Edw. III., but still perpetuated in the writs which summon bishops to Parliament, which, in such fictitious style as our law delights in, requires the attendance of a certain number of the clergy with the bishops not in Convocation but in Parliament!

In 1703, after an interval of nearly forty years, Convocation was again assembled as it were by chance. A parliament was about to assemble. Some deans and archdeacons, who, as Bishop Mant expresses it, "happened to be in Dublin," urged the prelates who also happened to be in Dublin, to bring the subject before the Viceroy. The Duke of Ormonde referred to the Queen. But the whole history of Convocation seemed again matter of uncertainty. No one appeared to understand it. A number of questions relating to

the institution were proposed by the Government to the bishops then in Dublin, which are evidence how little was known then about Irish Convocation. All was in doubt respecting the very method of convening the assembly. As in 1661, the Government propose a number of queries to the bishops respecting the constitution and powers of Convocation. The Government are satisfied with their reply, and in conformity with their view of the matter (which coincided with the report of the archbishops in 1661), Convocation is again summoned in the same improper manner by the clause “*præmonentes*” in the bishops’ writs. The Clergy of the Lower House, who were thus summoned by the bishops’ writs to Parliament, were better acquainted than their superiors with the legitimate order of a Convocation. They required that the provincial writ (as in England) should convene them as an ecclesiastical synod. Their demand was undoubtedly correct. If so, it follows that no legitimate Convocation had been previously held in Ireland. For no Convocation had hitherto, by the testimony of the bishops themselves, been summoned in the way absolutely indispensable for convening a valid and legitimate synod.

The clergy who met in Dublin, in compliance with the summons to Parliament, contained in the “*præmonentes*” clause did not regard themselves as a Convocation. They thus addressed the bishops—“ We humbly beg to represent to your Lordships the sense and desires of the lower clergy in this extraordinary juncture. My Lords, we do (with all duty and deference to your Lordships) conceive that the clergy of

this kingdom, when met in a perfect and entire Convocation, do assemble in two distinct capacities, viz., in a civil, and in an ecclesiastical capacity. In the first we apprehend ourselves to be called together by Her Majesty's Writ in the clause "præmonentes;" and that in virtue of this, we have a right to be formed into a regular body to be attendants upon and councillors to the Parliament, in whatever may relate to the temporal rights of the Church, as interwoven with the state: in our ecclesiastical capacity we look upon it as absolutely necessary to be summoned by the Provincial Writ, and your Graces' Metropolitical authority consequent upon that writ, which forms us into a National and truly Ecclesiastical Synod, to frame Canons, to reform discipline, censure heresie, and to exert that jurisdiction which belongs to us in conjunction with your lordships as the representative members of the national Church." The provincial writs were accordingly issued; and a legitimate Convocation assembled.

In this same year, 1703, we find Archbishop Marsh writing to Archbishop Tennison for information on Convocation matters.

With the proceedings of Convocation in 1705, Archbishop King was utterly dissatisfied. In a letter of March 15th, 1705, he thus entreats the Bishop of Clogher, "*For God's sake endeavour to procure a few Canons* for the regulation of things amiss in our discipline; if we do so, all things will come in course. We have our Saviour's promise, 'seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.' But if the Convocation only mind the secular

profit of the Church, or such things as the Parliament must do for them, the world will look upon all this as priest-craft and carnal interest, and we shall get nothing." Again, in a letter to the Archbishop of Tuam, of April 17, 1705, "I only desire your Grace to consider how it will look to have it published to the world, as I doubt it will be, that the Lower House applied themselves to the business of the Church, proposed so many things for her advantage, but that the bishops obstructed all, and never vouchsafed so much as to give the least answer to what was proposed, or so much as to signify that they had ecclesiastical affairs in their minds." And once more in a letter to the same, of the 4th July,—"It is an uncomfortable thing that all assemblies of men come to some conclusion and agreement *only clergymen*; that all that have controversies can write with temper and humanity, but they treat one another with passion and bitterness." Has a century and a-half mitigated the *odium theologicum*?

The last Irish Convocation met in 1711. Of it Archbishop King writes to Swift, on September 1st. "As to our Convocation, a letter came from her Majesty to give a License to act; but it nowise pleased some people, and so it was sent back to be modelled to their mind, but returned again without alteration."

And again to the same, on November 10th, the Archbishop speaks of the Convocation in terms by no means flattering. "Both the Parliament and the Convocation have been so ordered as to make us appear the worst people in the world, disloyal to her Majesty, and enemies to the Church."

In 1713, some idea was entertained of assembling Convocation. In a letter to Sir John Stanley, on the appointment of the Duke of Shrewsbury as Lord Lieutenant, dated September 22nd, 1713, the Archbishop of Dublin thus mentions the subject:—"I believe it may be of use to put his Grace in mind of our Convocation, which, it is expected will sit with the Parliament; and what is to be done about it."

In 1727, Primate Boulter* alludes to the Irish Convocation in terms which show how dubious in his estimation was its constitution and authority. "I find by my Lord Lieutenant the ministry are not desirous that a Convocation should sit here; nor do I desire it, except they had some useful business to do, and I was thoroughly certain they would confine themselves to that. I have had no great occasion or leisure to inquire into the nature of our Convocation here; but as it is made up of the Clergy of four provinces, I find some of our Bench question *whether they have ever been settled in such a regular method of being called as to make a truly legal assembly.*"

These rough sketches of Irish Convocation will, we suspect, incline our readers to regard it with us as an informal, inefficient institution, and to deprecate its restoration as the best form of synodical action. But we have still a more positive objection. We should view the assembling of an *Irish* Convocation as a step towards a disuniting of Churches, whose close adhesion is itself one main Article in the Legislative Union.

* In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, dated January 13th, 1727, Bishop Mant erroneously assigns this letter to the year 1728.

If we were *Repealers*, we should go for Irish Convocation. There would then remain indeed but “the splendid phantom of a United” Church. The collisions that would inevitably arise between National Convocations of co-ordinate jurisdiction would be a virtual separation of the two Churches now happily made *one*. Differences might, and probably would, arise on rubrical and doctrinal subjects which might sever us from England, and might render the bond of Union between the two Churches only one of those fictions in which the law delights. Can we forget (and is the recurrence of such a collision impossible?) the adoption by the Irish Convocation in 1615 of the celebrated Lambeth Articles which in England had been already suppressed by Elizabeth, and rejected by James at the Hampton Court Conference, when proposed by Dr. Reynolds? Would the thirty-nine Articles *ever* have taken the place of the one hundred and four Irish Articles, but for the “way propounded by my Lord Primate how to bring upon this Clergy the Articles of England, and silence those of Ireland without noise, as it were *aliud agens*.”—STRAFFORD’S LETTERS, I. 329.

The following words are the *Key note* of the Legislative Union :—“The question of Union was brought forward upon the principle that *two independent Legislatures had a tendency to separate*.”* Would not this *tendency to separate* from, or, to collide with, each other, exist fully as much in two independent Ecclesiastical, as in two secular Legislatures? At the time of the Union, the plan of a *United Convocation* for

* Lord Castlereagh to Duke of Portland, Jan. 28, 1799.

England and Ireland was seriously entertained by the Irish Legislature. Both Mr. Pitt and Lord Castlereagh were strongly favorable. The 5th Article of the Union, as proposed by the English Houses of Parliament, in their resolutions laid before the King with their joint address of April 22nd, 1799, contains indeed no mention of Convocation. 5.—“That for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose that the Churches of that part of Great Britain called England, and of that part of Great Britain called Scotland, and of Ireland, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, shall be preserved as now by Law Established.” On the 5th of February following, Lord Castlereagh proposed the Article to the Irish House of Commons with most important additions. 5.—“That for the same purpose, it would be fit to propose, that the Churches of that part of Great Britain called England, and of Ireland shall be united into one Church ; and the Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, &c., of the Churches of England and Ireland, shall from time to time be summoned to, and entitled to sit in, Convocation of the United Church in the like manner, and subject to the same regulations, as are at present by the law established, with respect to the like orders of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government, of the said United Church shall be preserved as now by law established for the Church of England.” On 21st March this Article was adopted by the Irish House of Commons in the words of Castlereagh. On the 26th of the same month, the Article was amended in the House of Lords, and on the 27th adopted by both

Houses in their joint address to the King, in the following shape:—"That the Churches of that part of Great Britain called England and of Ireland, shall be united into one Church ; and that when His Majesty shall summon a Convocation, *the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy of the several Provinces in Ireland, shall be respectively summoned to and sit in the Convocation of the United Church* in the like manner, and subject to the same regulations as to election and qualification as are at present by law established with respect to the like orders of the Church of England; and that the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said United Churches shall be preserved as now by law established for the Church of England, saving to the Church of Ireland all the rights, privileges, and jurisdictions now thereunto belonging." On the 21st of April, Mr. Pitt proposed to the British House of Commons to receive the 5th Article, with the additions respecting Convocation, in the same form as had been agreed on in the joint address of the Irish Houses, and he expressed his own approval of what had been added. But, in committee on the Union bill (May 5th, 1800), Mr. Pitt said, "it was judged better to omit the insertion of any Provisional Article respecting the Convocation *till the Union actually took place* ; more particularly as His Majesty, as the Head of both Churches, had the power to call such a Convocation when he pleased." The entire clauses respecting Convocation was consequently struck out. The Irish Parliament acquiesced in the omission, and passed the 5th Article as it now stands, *relying on the pledge given by Mr. Pitt* that *when the Union took*

place, the Bishops and Clergy of Ireland should be entitled to sit in a *Convocation of the United Church*.

And if the United Church is to possess synodical powers—free from anomalies and national distinctions, it can only be obtained by a *Convocation of the United Church*. The double Convocation of York and Canterbury is sufficiently complex machinery to demand a simplification ; shall we add to this Ecclesiastical confusion by calling for an Irish Convocation ? It is bad enough that the United Church should now speak with a tongue divided in two ; shall we strive to force our mother to stammer through a triple mouth ? We trust that the Irish Clergy will not commit themselves to any movement, as impolitic (for *union* with England's Church is our strength) as it would be unsuccessful, in favor of an *Irish Convocation*. Let those who are anxious that the Irish Church should resume her synodical functions, strive not for a local sectional assembly but for a **CONVOCATION OF THE UNITED CHURCH**. This was what the Irish Parliament proposed as necessary to the real union of the two Churches ; this was promised by the British First Minister, as soon as the union took place ; and on fit occasion the promise could not now be denied, or withheld without compromising the good faith of the English Crown and Parliament.

APPENDIX.

PROPOSED REVIVAL OF CONVOCATION IN IRELAND.

To the Most Rev. John George, by Divine Providence, Lord Archbishop of Armagh, Primate and Metropolitan of all Ireland.

The humble Memorial of the undersigned,

SHEWETH,

That your Memorialists, whilst they acknowledge, with gratitude to Almighty God, the many and singular blessings which it has pleased Him in His goodness to bestow on this Church and Nation, are yet deeply sensible that for the due fulfilment of her high and holy mission the United Church of England and Ireland requires a further development of her Synodal powers.

That they have observed, of late years, that the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury has frequently met for deliberative action, and that during the present Session of the Imperial Parliament the Royal License has been granted to that Province of the United Church, to revise, and if necessary repeal the xxixth canon of its book of canons.

That the Convocation of York has met, and has petitioned the Crown that a similar License may be granted to it.

That the xxixth English Canon was adopted by the whole Church of Ireland in its National Synod of 1634, and forms the xvith of the canons then enacted, and it has remained unaltered since that period.

That by the Fifth Article of the Act of Union, "the Churches of England and Ireland as then by Law established were united into one Protestant Episcopal Church, to be called the United Church of England and Ireland;" and it was declared "that the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of the said United Church shall be and shall remain in full force for ever, as the same are now by law established for the Church of England.

That by the constitution of this realm the Sovereign is solemnly pledged "to preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England and Ireland, and to the churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall pertain to them or any of them."

That previous to the Act of Union, from the year 1615, it was customary for the Convocation of the Church of Ireland to assemble with the Irish Parliament, but that since the year 1711 it has, if summoned at all, been summoned only *pro forma*, and has not transacted any business.

That the Convocation of the Province of York has not transacted business for a still longer period, till March 1861.

That so long as the English Provinces of the United Church met *pro forma*, or for deliberation only, your Memorialists did not consider it necessary to take any active steps in the matter; but now that the Province of Canterbury has been permitted to take legislative action, and the province of York has petitioned the Crown to grant them the like privilege, your Memorialists deem that the time has arrived when it becomes absolutely necessary in order to preserve the uniformity of discipline and government established by the Act of Union, and "declared to be an essential and fundamental part of that Union," that the voice of the Irish Provinces of the United Church should be heard in Convocation.

Your Memorialists therefore humbly pray that your Grace, in conjunction with His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Dublin, will be pleased to take such steps as in your united wisdom shall seem best for the furtherance of the above objects.

And your Memorialists will ever pray.

(Signed on behalf of the Diocesan Committee of Down, Connor, and Dromore,)

ROBERT DOWN & CONNOR, *Chairman*
 T. CAMPBELL,
 ALFRED T. LEE,
 H. MURPHY, } *Hon. Sec.*

CLERICAL ROOMS, BELFAST,
April 16, 1861.

ANSWER OF THE LORD PRIMATE TO THE LORD BISHOP OF
 DOWN AND CONNOR.

Palace, Armagh, May 6, 1861.

MY DEAR LORD,

In answer to the Memorial of the Diocesan Committee of Down, Connor, and Dromore, dated the 16th of April, which I received on the 23rd, I beg to say that when it was announced in the last session of parliament, by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, that the Royal License was granted to the Convocation of Canterbury, empowering the Bishops and Representatives of the Clergy of that Province to alter, amend, or repeal the xxixth canon, or to make a new one to be substituted in place of it, I thought it my duty to seek for the ablest legal advice I could procure, to guide me as to the course which, under such circum-

stances, it would be right for me to recommend the Prelates and Clergy of the Irish Provinces of the United Church to adopt. As soon as I obtained the opinions of Counsel on this subject, I had them printed for circulation; and I forwarded copies to your Lordship and to the other Prelates.

The learned members of the Bar whom I consulted agreed unanimously in opinion, that in the event of a repeal or alteration of the xxixth canon by the Convocations of Canterbury and York, it would not be necessary that any step should be taken with a view to preserve uniformity of discipline throughout the United Church,—inasmuch as the repeal or alteration of that canon, even if sanctioned by Her Majesty, would be “inoperative,” because the Rubric prefixed to the Order of Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer (which is a statutable provision, and consequently can only be altered with the consent of the Legislature), requires that every child shall have three Godparents, who, according to the true legal construction of the terms employed in the Rubric, must be persons other than the natural parents.

I have not seen any opinions of Counsel giving a different view of the law, and showing that the conclusion arrived at by Sir Fitzroy Kelly, Sir Hugh Cairns, Mr. A. J. Stephens, and Mr. Jebb is erroneous. And I cannot, in opposition to the judgment of such able men, concur in the view put forward in the Memorial, that “the time has arrived when it becomes absolutely necessary, in order to preserve the *uniformity of discipline* and government *established by the Act of Union*, that the voice of the Irish Provinces of the United Church should be heard in Convocation.

If the Irish Convocation were convened to-morrow, it could not assume, and ought not to appear as if it assumed, the power of altering any Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer, or of giving to the words of a Rubric a construction different from that which they legally bear.

I have observed with great interest the recent proceedings of the Convocations of Canterbury and York, as reported in the Newspapers. But I do not perceive that any change in the discipline of the Church would be effected by the proposed canon which the Prelates in the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury have sent down to the Lower House for its approval. In the Supplement to the *Guardian* of March 6th, p. 226, it is stated that the proposed canon is as follows:—

Children not Communicants not to be Godparents in Baptism.
“No Godfather or Godmother shall be suffered to make any other
“answer or speech than by the Book of Common Prayer is pre-
“scribed in that behalf; neither shall any person be admitted
“Godfather or Godmother to any child, at Christening or Con-

"firmation before the person so undertaking hath received the
"Holy Communion."

This canon does not make any provision for admitting parents to answer as Sponsors at the Baptism of their own children. And if Her Majesty should be pleased to "allow, approve, and confirm the same," all that the canon could accomplish would be to reinforce in the Province of Canterbury certain existing rules of the Church.

For my own part, I am free to say that, in my judgment, it would be desirable to relax the existing rule as to Sponsors, so as to make it lawful to baptize children who have only one Godparent. I am persuaded also, that the majority of the Prelates, Clergy, and Laity of the Irish portion of the United Church concur with me in this opinion. But the framing of a new rule on this, or any like matter in which the whole Church, and not merely one Province, is interested, would, I think, be more easily and properly considered and decided on in a National Synod of the United Church, than in separate Provincial Convocations;—which, if assembled simultaneously, would be ignorant of what was passing in each other's meetings,—or, if assembled consecutively, would, in a great degree, be subordinate to the one which met first,—and in either ease, would be without sufficient opportunity of mutual conference and explanation. In fact, the free exercise of Legislative power by separate Provincial Convocations, in reference to matters not strictly Provincial, would expose the Church to the risk of disunion.

For the mere purpose, however, of considering and altering a regulation relating only to the number of Godfathers and Godmothers at Baptism, I presume that it would be deemed unsuitable to convene the whole Episcopate and Representatives of the Clergy of every diocese of the United Church, while matters of greater importance, which urgently claim the deepest consideration, remain unsettled.

If at any time a well-considered plan for a general revision of the Canons and of the Rubrics,—or for shortening the accustomed services, and adding new occasional services to those contained in the Book of Common Prayer,—or for amending the Laws which regulate the discipline of the Church—should be previously framed by the Heads of the Church and the State, it would seem to me that a *National Synod of the United Church* is the appropriate body for considering the principle and arranging the details of such a measure, before the introduction into Parliament of a Bill for giving it legal effect.

Should an occasion of this kind present itself during the remaining period of my protracted Primacy, my best endeavours shall be



A 000 792 213 1

used to bring about the convening of a National Synod of the United Church. In the resolutions of the Irish Parliament preparatory to the Legislative Union, provision was made respecting the meeting of such a Synod; but this provision was omitted in the Act of Union, because, as the Prime Minister stated in the British House of Commons, the Sovereign could at any time command the assembling of a "Convocation of the United Church."

I have consulted the Archbishop of Dublin on the subject of the Memorial; and it is a great satisfaction to me to know that His Grace agrees with me in the sentiments which I have thus expressed in answer to it, and that His Grace considers my view of this matter to be correct.

I remain, my dear Lord, Yours faithfully,

JOHN G. ARMAGH.

The Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.

THE END.

